(d) the points in UP, Bihar and Bengal in which work on the physical cleaning of the Ganga river has been carried out;

(e) the stretch on which the work is still pending and by when the same is likely to be completed; and

(f) the total amount spent on cleaning of Ganga, till date?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The news-item refers to a new website launched by the Sankat Mochan Foundation, a Varanasi based Non-Governmental Organisation to create awareness about the cleaning of river Ganga.

(c) The Central Ganga Authority was set up in February, 1985 and renamed as the National River Conservation Authority in September, 1995 with the incorporation of other major rivers of the country.

(d) and (e) Under Ganga Action Plan Phase I, pollution abatement works like sewage interception and diversion, sewage treatment plants, low cost sanitation, crematoria, river front development etc., were taken up in 6 towns of UP, 4 of Bihar and 15 of West Bengal. These works have since been completed except for 3 sewage treatment plants, 1 in West Bengal and 2 in Bihar which are targeted to be completed by March, 2002 and September, 2000 respectively. Under this phase, a capacity to treat 835 million litres per day of sewage has been created. In the second phase of the Ganga Action Plan, similar works have been taken up and are being implemented in 22 towns of UP, 14 of Bihar and 23 of West Bengal. A capacity of 1860 million litres per day of sewage is targeted to be intercepted, diverted and treated. These works are likely to be completed by 2005. The work on the physical cleaning of the river Ganga referred to in the news-item was taken up under the public participation and awareness programme at various places along with the river Ganga from time to time.

(f) An amount of Rs. 539 crore has been spent on the cleaning of the Ganga by the Government so far under phase I and II of the Ganga Action Plan.

Complaints against IFS Officers

1358. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that public complaint was made against some very senior I.F.S. Officers of the Sikkim Forest Department, for having amassed huge assets, disproportionate to their known sources of income;

(b) whether it is a fact that PMO has also forwarded the same for investigation / inquiry to the Director of vigilance of the Ministry; if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what are the findings of the inquiry?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU):(a)Yes,Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) A complaint was received against certain Indian Forest Service Officers of Sikkim cadre, which was subsequently forwarded to the State Government for investigation / report. After inquiry, Government of Sikkjm informed that these officers do not possess assets dis-proportionate to known sources of their income and Government of Sikkim closed the case.

Population of Tigers and Leopard

1359. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the population of tigers and leopards in the country, State-wise;

(b) whether it is a fact that their population is decreasing day by day;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) what steps are being taken to protect and maintain their population in the country?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) The estimated numbers of tigers and leopards in the country are at Statement I and II respectivley *(See below).*

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Following steps has been taken to protect the population of tigers and leopards:

(i) Legal protection has been provided to wild animals including tigers against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act. 1972.